

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 AID-20

IGA-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01

DRC-01 /091 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4318

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL DHARAHAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

S E C R E T SANAA 1911

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, MARR, YE, YS, SU, US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION OF DEP ASST SECY SOBER WITH PRIMIN AYNI

DHARAHAN PASS SOBER

1. SUMMARY: CONVERSATION COVERED USG ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, MILITARY SITUATION VIS-A-VIS ADEN, AND RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA. PRIMIN ASKED THAT USG DO ALL POSSIBLE TO AID YEMEN. SAID YARG VERY WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBILITY PDRY SEIZURE BAB-AL-MANDEB AND HAD WARNED PDRY THAT IT WOULD MEAN ALL-OUT WAR. SAID THAT WHILE HE ENJOYED SUPPORT OF NUMBER OF SAG LEADERS, SOME HARD LINERS, ESPECIALLY NEJRAN GOVERNOR KHALID SUDAIRY, THOUGHT THAT AYNI ACTUALLY FAVORED ADEN.

2. DEP ASST SECY SOBER, ACCCOMPANIED BY CHARGE, CALLED ON PRIMIN AYNI EVENING SEPT 12. PRIMIN WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL, NOTING HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM AN INSPECTION TOUR OF HODEIDA AND HAJJA AND HAD DELAYED A SIMILAR VISIT TO BEIDHA (IN SE) IN ORDER TO MEET MR SOBER.

3. PRIMIN FIRST BROUGHT UP SUBJECT US AID. EXPRESSING HIS

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APPRECIATION FOR WHAT HAD BEEN GIVEN SO FAR, HE HOPED USG WOULD

BE EVEN MORE GENEROUS. YARG HAD EMERGED FROM REVOLUTION AGAINST MEDIEVAL REGIME AND SEVEN YEARS OF CIVIL WAR WITHOUT ANY KIND OF INFRASTRUCTURE-NO SCHOOLS, ROADS, HOSPITALS. YEMENI PEOPLE, WHO UNTIL END OF CIVIL WAR ONLY PREOCCUPIED WITH SURVIVAL, NOW WANTED TO KNOW WHAT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT COULD DO FOR THEM. YARG WAS IN RACE AGAINST TIME TO RETAIN THEIR LOYALTY.

4. SOBER RESPONDED THAT YARG-USG FRIENDSHIP FIRM. POLITICAL WILL TO HELP EXISTS. A SEVERAL-FOLD INCREASE IN USG ECONOMIC AID, INCLUDING A LOAN TO FINANCE TAIZ WATER SYSTEM EXPANSION HAD BEEN REQUESTED FROM CONGRESS THIS YEAR.

5. ON MILITARY SIDE, PRIMIN EXPRESSED APPREHENSION ABOUT POTENTIAL PDRY THREAT TO BAB-AL-MANDEB IN WHICH HE SAW YARG'S TRUE OPPONENT AS SOVIET UNION, NOT PDRY. DURING RECENT VISIT OF PDRY FONMIN MUTI', PRIMIN HAD WARNED HIM THAT ANY "SMASH AND GRAB" AT YARG TERRITORY WOULD LEAD TO ALL-OUT WAR. HE TOLD MUTI' THAT YARG CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY IN BAB-AL-MANDEB AREA WAS ONLY TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR TROOPS AND OFFERED TO TAKE MUTI' TO AREA FOR INSPECTION.

6. PRIMIN ELABORATED THAT DEMARCHE TO OTHER ARAB STATES ABOUT SOVIET-SUPPORTED PDRY THREAT TO BAB-AL-MANDEB HAD BROUGHT PROTEST FROM SOVIET CHARGE HERE. AYNI SAID HE HAD TOLD LATTER THAT SOVIET UNION NO LONGER FRIEND OF YAR SINCE IT HAD CHOSEN TO SIDE WITH PDRY AND SOMALIA. YARG WAS THEREFORE LOOKING FOR ARMS FROM ANYWHERE TO COUNTER SOVIET-ARMED PDRY FORCES. HE STRESSED THAT ARMS WERE ONLY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES.

7. IN RESPONSE SOBER'S QUESTION, PRIMIN SAID HE FAVORED EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE TO MODERATE PDRY GOVERNMENT. ALL THAT YARG ASKED WAS THAT PDRY NOT THREATEN YAR.

8. PRIMIN SAID THAT RELATIONS WITH SAG WERE STILL PROBLEM FOR HIM. HE ENJOYED CONFIDENCE OF A NUMBER OF SAG LEADERS SUCH AS KAMAL ADHAM, DR RASHAD PHARAON, AND OMAR SAQQAF. SOME HARD LINERS, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY NEJRAN GOVERNOR KHALID SUDAIRI, THOUGHT HE FAVORED ADEN. DURING RECENT VISIT TO MARIB, SOME LOCAL SHAIKHS PRIMED BY SUDAIRI, HAD EVEN ACCUSED HIM OF BEING PRO-COMMUNIST.

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